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ABSTRACT

The Chicago School Reform Act mandated that schools develop and implement their own school improvement plans (SIPs) to meet systemwide goals and expected outcomes. This paper examines the implementation of SIP initiatives in 14 Chicago public schools. Data were derived from interviews with principals and advisory committee chairpersons and from observations of local school council meetings. The reform initiatives, implemented during 1990-91, are categorized as pedagogical, curricular, organizational, or other. Two patterns of SIP implementation are identified: (1) some initiatives require a significant commitment of time and effort to be implemented successfully; and (2) other initiatives depend mostly on funding and new staff. The first type takes longer to implement whereas the second type, requiring funding and staff, tends to be implemented quickly. Two types of programs include those that change teacher practices and those that are "add-ons." Findings suggest that few SIPs have prompted changes in regular classroom teaching practices. Four factors that facilitate the implementation of instructional change are identified: (1) smaller school size; (2) principals who take a strong instructional leadership role; (3) staff development funding; and (4) the development of an ethos of shared teacher-student responsibility for learning. Two figures are included. (LMI)

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III. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGE

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Introduction

Public Act 85-1418, the Chicago School Reform Act, required that schools submit a detailed school improvement plan (SIP) outlining how they expect to achieve several major outcomes and goals. The legislation charges schools to improve test scores in math and reading on a nationally normed, standardized achievement test, improve attendance rates, reduce the number of elementary school students who are retained, and increase the high school graduation rate. The Act also lists other school goals in the areas of curriculum, school climate, student transition to employment, teacher professionalism, and parent and community involvement. Given these systemwide goals and expected outcomes, schools were mandated to develop and implement their own plans to improve school performance.

The local school councils adopted three-year SIPs in the spring of 1990. The School Reform Act states that the local school councils are responsible for monitoring the implementation of their plans. The plans from our sample of fourteen schools include a wide variety of initiatives, or statements about the actions school personnel plan to carry out to achieve the objectives of reform. We have described these in greater detail in a previous report.[6]

Here, we focus on the implementation of SIP initiatives. The first section of this paper discusses the influence teachers had on the development of the SIPs from our fourteen schools. In the second section, we examine those SIP initiatives that teachers and administrators implemented or began to implement during the school year 1990-91. We categorize the reform initiatives as pedagogical, curricular, organizational, or other, and provide examples of the implementation of each type. Two patterns characterize the implementation of these initiatives. Some initiatives take a long time to carry out and require a commitment of time and effort, whereas others are fully implemented with just acquiring the needed funding and adding new staff. We also distinguish whether or not initiatives affect the regular classroom teacher and may lead to instructional changes. We examine the contribution of SIPs and other school factors to instructional change in the last section of the paper.

In this analysis, we rely on the following data from our fourteen focus schools: their school improvement plans; interviews with their principals and Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC) chairpersons; and observations of their LSC meetings. We

[6] See G.A. Hess, Jr. and J.Q. Easton. (1991). Who Makes What Decisions? *Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance*.

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also refer to the citywide results from the survey of Chicago elementary school teachers, *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn.*[7]

Teachers and School Improvement Plan Development

The level of teacher participation in SIP development and revision varied across our sample of schools, from no teacher involvement to 100 percent. Three schools in our sample had an established pre-reform tradition of shared decision making. Teachers in these schools took charge of plan development and helped to set their schools' agendas through the SIPs. At the other schools, with little experience in shared decision making, two factors appear to have facilitated greater teacher involvement in plan development: training and organization. Teachers from one school attended training sessions on SIP development. The PPAC chair commented that the training had been "...a very good way to get us going and get us organized." Teachers at some other schools organized themselves effectively to work on their SIPs. They divided up the tasks, set aside blocks of time to work on the plans or the revisions, and then coordinated the pulling together of the final product. Teachers played an important role in SIP development and revision at some of the schools in our sample.

All teacher proposals for the SIP are subject to the consideration of both the principal and the LSC. The School Reform Act states: "The local school principal shall develop a school improvement plan in consultation with the local school council, all categories of school staff, parents and community residents." Thus, the principal is primarily responsible for developing the SIP, and the LSC must approve it. Some teachers feared that principals would include little of the teachers' input in the final version of the school's plan. In all but one or two of our fourteen schools, this was not the case. As the following comments from the PPAC chairs illustrate, principals and LSCs usually respected teacher contributions to the SIP:

> Last year, they [the LSC] took our document and just about adopted the whole thing as the SIP.
>
> The LSC has accepted all suggestions except for the security issue.
>
> They did, surprisingly....After our retreat we did the fine tuning of it and it was printed up afterwards and approved by the LSC.
>
> I don't know of anything they didn't approve....
>
> None of our suggestions were ever turned down [but]...we had a contingency plan, if enough money comes up. It's for an additional guidance counselor.
>
> I did attend the last LSC meeting, and they accepted everything.

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[7] See J.Q. Easton, A.S. Bryk, M.E. Driscoll, J.G. Kotsakis, P.A. Sebring, and A.J. van der Ploeg. (1991). *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*, October 1991 issue of *Catalyst*. This survey was sponsored by the Consortium on Chicago School Research; the Chicago Panel participated in this project.

Although the reform legislation assigns the PPAC an advisory, rather than a governing role, at most of the focus schools, teachers have not been denied a voice in their SIPs.

Research has demonstrated that teacher involvement in the planning process is important for successful program implementation[8]. One educational researcher notes:

> One of the most important components of a successful school-based program is that teachers must have a central role in the development of the program....The failure to involve teachers in the planning and development of programs has led to the failure of many innovative programs."[9]

Consequently, those schools with greater teacher participation in the development and revision of the plans are likely to have greater teacher support for the implementation of SIP reforms. Fifty-three percent of about 13,000 Chicago elementary teachers who responded to the teachers' survey agreed with the statement, "I helped develop the SIP for my school" (*Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*, page 5). According to the literature in the implementation field, then, the Chicago teachers' responses provide some justification for cautious optimism about their role in carrying out SIP initiatives, especially in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

Implementation of School Improvement Plan Initiatives

The fourteen plans from the focus schools contain widely diverse reform initiatives. We have classified these initiatives as **pedagogical** (dealing with teaching); **curricular** (pertaining to subject-matter content); **organizational** (specifying some reorganization of classes, grades, or the entire school); or **other** (such as parent and community involvement programs and attendance incentives). The first three categories roughly locate initiatives according to their anticipated effects. They are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, we hope that school personnel implement an organizational initiative, for example, so that it does have an impact on both curriculum and instruction, as well as on school organization. The table below presents a selection of SIP initiatives from the fourteen schools categorized by this schema.

School improvement plan initiatives are of little value if they are not implemented. We asked principals and key teachers, usually PPAC chairpersons, at the fourteen schools about the progress made towards implementing SIP initiatives--both those initiatives that

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[8] See McLaughlin and Marsh. (1978). Staff Development and School Change. *Teachers College Record, 80(1)*, 69-94. See also Doyle and Ponder. (1977) The Ethic of Practicality: Implications for Curriculum Development. *Curriculum Theory*, A. Molnar and J.A. Zahorik, eds., Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 74-80.

[9] Waxman, H.C. (1985). Research on School-Based Improvement Programs: Its Implications for Curriculum Implementation. *Education, 105(3)*, 318-22.

they elected to discuss and those we judged to be the most prominent in their plans.[10] This section, organized by type of initiative, recounts some of their descriptions of more successful, less successful, and on-going implementation. We close the section with our conclusions about implementing SIP initiatives.

Types of School Improvement Plan Initiatives			
Pedagogical	Curricular	Organizational	Other
Writing Across the Curriculum	Jr. Great Books	smaller class size	parent and community involvement
team teaching	Windows on Science	walking reading	attendance programs
whole language	new text books	school within a school organization	discipline programs
hands-on approaches	Afro-centric curriculum	after-school tutoring	building improvements
cooperative learning	student self esteem curricular programs		
	curricular labs		
	enrichment programs		
	pre-kindergarten programs		
	full-day kindergarten		

Pedagogical Initiatives

Pedagogical initiatives speak to the teacher's "teaching"; they tend to place emphasis on how something is taught. Some examples of pedagogical initiatives are whole language programs in language arts, cooperative learning, team teaching, and writing across the curriculum. Upon implementation, pedagogical initiatives should result in changes in the teachers' classroom practices.

The fourteen SIPs list considerably fewer pedagogical initiatives than those in the "curricular" or "other" categories. Eight SIPs include pedagogical initiatives, and the principals or key teachers at six of the schools report that they are making progress on implementing those initiatives.[11] Most pedagogical initiatives apply only to teachers in certain grades or departments, but a few plan for schoolwide changes. Most schoolwide pedagogical initiatives have not yet been fully implemented.

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[10] This implementation review was a relatively informal process--not a strict audit of the implementation status of all components of the SIPs.

[11] With one exception, high school personnel did not mention instructional changes during their interviews. They may not have been informed about the implementation of departmentalized instructional initiatives.

The school personnel interviewed suggest that only those teachers who are motivated to improve their own instructional practices push themselves to do so. In particular, the outcomes of team-teaching, peer-tutoring, and cooperative-learning initiatives in our sample of schools seem to depend on individual teachers who are willing to try out new pedagogical practices. One PPAC chair said:

> ...some people are willing to change and other people are older and have lived successfully and feel that what they're doing has value, so don't feel the need to change. Those are the people you have to make into believers.

As the PPAC chair suggests, schoolwide implementation of a pedagogical initiative occurs only when all the teachers are "believers," i.e., they commit themselves to learn, employ, and adapt the new approach to teaching called for in the initiative.

One high school SIP included a schoolwide initiative on writing across the curriculum. After receiving a $10,000 grant from the Joyce Foundation, the principal coordinated an extensive staff development program on this topic. Outside consultants advised the English teachers on how to teach and stimulate writing in diverse subjects. The English teachers, in turn, instructed the staff from other departments. As a result of this year-long project, the quantity of student writing increased across subjects. The principal questions the continuation of this program, however. No funding remains for more staff development, or for monitoring and evaluating the program.

> The funding is gone and the project is completed, but are we going to continue? I mean, is the social studies department going to go back to... (where) they were two years ago, or is there really still going to be an emphasis on writing. I don't think you can just assume it's going to happen. That is going to require continued monitoring...

One elementary school's experience with Socratic seminars in the seventh and eighth grades provide a second example of the longitudinal nature of implementing instructional change. The goal of the seminars is to develop students' analytic thinking skills by increasing the complexity of classroom discussion. The Socratic format requires extensive staff development for effective implementation. Teachers learn questioning skills that pique students' interest and curiosity in diverse topics. They must know the material well and be able to engage all students in discussion.[12] In the seminars, teachers encourage students to reflect and share their insights as they explore issues in depth.

After two semesters of conducting the Socratic seminars, the teachers at this elementary school met with the principal to evaluate the program. They taped and reviewed some of the seminars because teachers and students were not yet satisfied with them. The principal proposed that she interview students on videotape for the teachers. She then asked teachers to critique the set of tapes at home. After this, the staff met to discuss and revise the seminar format. They decided to divide students into smaller groups so that the

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[12] See *Introducing the Socratic Seminar into the Elementary School Classroom: A Resource Book for Teachers and Administrators*. (1991). Chicago Board of Education.

students would have more speaking opportunities. The principal and teachers attributed part of the eighth graders' significant gains in the language arts section of the IGAP (Illinois Goals Assessment Program) to the Socratic seminars, and so they have decided to try out this approach in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, too.

The principals and teachers describe the implementation of new ways of teaching as a lengthy and, at times, difficult process. Teachers must believe, and convince their colleagues, that changing their current practices is worth the necessary commitment of time and effort. They have to participate in staff development programs and then incorporate the new strategies into their teaching. They must mutually support each other's continuing experimentation with the new strategies, while adapting them to meet school policies, requirements, and the needs of their students. Principals and PPAC chairs at our sample of schools discuss the implementation of a pedagogical initiative as an on-going endeavor.

Curricular Initiatives

Curricular initiatives deal with changes in <u>what</u> is taught. Adopting new textbooks, adding an art class to the schedule, or setting up a new science lab are examples of curricular initiatives from the fourteen schools. Some curricular initiatives affect instruction as well as the curriculum. Curricular initiatives make up the largest category of initiatives in the fourteen plans.

PPAC chairs at two elementary schools in our sample have described the continuing implementation of their literature-based reading and language arts initiatives. Teachers at the first school have set aside the basal readers in favor of books like *The Pearl* and *The Red Pony*. After a ten-week staff development program on writing, most of the teachers have also adopted an emphasis on writing through student journals and/or writing portfolios. The teachers at this school say that their instructional practices have also changed considerably because of these departures from the traditional language arts curriculum. At the second school, teachers are taking longer to implement their new language arts program. The SIP initiative calls for the reading committee to review and select new readers for the upper grades. The committee spent several months examining possible texts and eventually decided to change to literature-based readers. Teachers then attended staff development meetings about the differences the new readers could introduce into their classes. The teachers at the second school planned to switch to the new readers in the fall of 1991. At both schools, the implementation of new language arts programs has been gradual, dependent on teacher efforts, and characterized by refinements to the original programs launched by the SIP initiatives.

At a third school, school personnel have not yet implemented a curricular initiative. Teachers planned to incorporate an Afro-centric component into the reading/language arts and social studies curricula. They received some materials and attended a workshop on the program, but the PPAC chair indicated that none of the faculty has yet redesigned the content of the classes. The teachers need further staff development before they can proceed

with the curricular changes. A disagreement as to who is responsible for planning the next stages of implementation has delayed the realization of this initiative.

Perhaps the most striking curricular initiatives, especially in terms of the money invested, are those that led to the creation and expansion of computer laboratories. One high school spent approximately $400,000 of its discretionary funds to purchase a comprehensive learning (computer) laboratory to supplement all curricular areas. Another school has equipped almost every classroom with a networked computer mini-lab so that students can begin and continue their work in any classroom. The school is also installing data bases from the National Geographic Society and the Chicago Public Library to facilitate student research. In general, funding and new staff are the key elements in the successful implementation of these curricular programs.

We have discovered two patterns in the implementation of curricular initiatives. The first curricular illustrations--implementing new literature-based reading/language arts programs at two schools and adding an Afro-centric component to certain classes at a third school--require a commitment of teachers' time and effort. The pattern of implementation is incremental; it proceeds from conceptualization to the classrooms via staff development, a great deal of teacher planning, and instructional trial and error. In this respect, the implementation of these sorts of curricular initiatives closely resembles that of the pedagogical initiatives, and contrasts sharply with the implementation of the computer labs. By and large, computer labs fall into place simply with sufficient funding and new staff. Other curricular initiatives that follow the second pattern of implementation include new science labs, full-day kindergartens, and pre-kindergarten classes. In addition, some elementary schools have recently expanded their curricular programs with art and music classes that have also been readily implemented through extra funding and the hiring of specialists.

What accounts for the two patterns of implementation? Clearly the demands that the programs make upon the regular classroom teacher affect the pattern of implementation. A change in the core curriculum places the burden of implementation on the classroom teachers, whereas setting up a new computer lab, adding a music class, or starting a pre-kindergarten program does not depend on them. The first pattern of implementation requires extensive staff development, teacher planning, and teacher commitment; the second requires new staff or specialists. We refer to the second set of curricular initiatives as "add-on programs" because their curricular impact tends to lie outside the regular classroom. The following table illustrates this distinction. Our interviews with school personnel indicate that the curricular add-on programs are more likely to be implemented than any other type of initiative.

At the schools in our sample, the only impediments to implementing curricular add-on programs are logistical problems. At one school, for example, the science lab did not get its furniture until several months into the school year. At another, the unforeseen lack of classrooms prevented the staff from adding the two full-day kindergartens planned in the SIP. The initiative had been contingent on the school receiving additional funds for mobile

units--a contingency that did not occur. With the exception of logistical difficulties such as these, school personnel have readily implemented curricular add-on initiatives.

Likelihood of School Improvement Plan Initiatives Affecting Classroom Practices				
	Pedagogical	Curricular	Organizational	Other
Initiatives That May Affect Regular Classroom Teachers	Writing Across the Curriculum team teaching whole language hands-on approaches cooperative learning	Jr. Great Books Windows on Science new text books African-centered curriculum student self esteem curricular programs	smaller class size walking reading school within a school organization	
Initiatives That Are Unlikely to Affect Classroom Teachers (Add-on Programs)		curricular labs enrichment programs pre-kindergarten programs full-day kindergarten	after-school tutoring	parent and community involvement attendance programs discipline programs building improvements

Organizational Initiatives

Organizational initiatives make up the category with the fewest SIP initiatives. They call for the restructuring of the school's physical, social, and instructional spaces. Organizational initiatives implemented before or after the school day are usually add-on programs; they have very little chance of affecting the classroom teacher. For instance, after-school tutoring through which students receive individualized or small-group instruction is an add-on initiative that may improve student performance. In contrast, organizational initiatives implemented during the school day usually do affect classroom teachers and, when completely implemented, they may facilitate instructional improvements. The most common organizational initiative in the fourteen SIPs is to reduce class size by allotting teachers, students, and classrooms in new ways. Other organizational initiatives include developing walking reading programs in which students with similar reading abilities who are in different grades or different rooms come together in one classroom for reading instruction, and establishing "a school within a school," which reorganizes faculty and/or classrooms to concentrate services or to build "closeness" across certain grades or departments. To reduce class size, institute a walking reading program, or form a "school within a school" requires the cooperation of the classroom teachers. Moreover, when classroom teachers take advantage of their new organizational settings, the implementation of these initiatives can have positive effects on their classroom practices.

Creating a "school within a school" is an initiative in three SIPs. The rationale for forming smaller units within large schools is that smaller schools have many desirable properties difficult to achieve in large schools. For instance, *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn* indicates that teachers at small schools are more positive about school governance, school reform and the quality of their schools than teachers at medium and large schools. Two schools have already implemented their "school within a school" programs. One middle school is now physically divided into three houses of approximately 240 students each. Each house has its own lunch room, and students leave their "house" only for swimming and gym. The second school has separated the primary, intermediate, and upper grades in some symbolic ways, such as holding separate graduation ceremonies for each level. In neither case has the reorganization had much impact on the classroom practices of teachers to date, but it lays a foundation for future changes. It will be important to see if separate "house faculties" institute different pedagogical or curricular efforts.

An initiative or goal included in eight SIPs is to reduce class size in the school. At least three schools have successfully carried out this initiative by hiring additional staff, adjusting schedules so that reading is taught throughout the day, and using specialized staff in the regular classroom. One school has successfully reduced the number of students in all of its reading and math classes from thirty or more to just sixteen or seventeen. A teacher at that school acknowledges, however, that reduce class size does not in itself improve the instruction students receive:

> They've got the sixteen (students) in front of them, that's fine, but there were other things that were supposed to happen to help the teaching process so that you could take advantage of the low class size. Low class size alone means nothing.

This teacher questions the rationale of using resources to reduce class size if teachers do not change their instructional practices to take advantage of the smaller classes. As with the "school within a school" programs, reducing class size does affect classroom teachers, but it has not yet influenced their ways of teaching.

The SIPs from our sample of schools frequently included after-school tutoring as an add-on organizational initiative. These are extended-day programs and are unlikely to have any direct impact on regular classrooms. Ten SIPs called for after-school tutoring to assist students in the core content areas such as reading, writing, math, and science. Tutoring programs are a means of providing students with more individualized instruction than is possible in the regular classroom. The programs are easily implemented with funding and either new staff, or with teachers willing to work additional hours after school.

Other Initiatives

The "other initiatives" category has several major components: parent and community involvement; counseling and discipline; and attendance. Some examples of other initiatives include a program to train parents to assist in the classroom, an "adopt-a-student" program in which core staff "adopt" or pay special attention to students from a designated class for

a month, and the building of partnerships between the school and outside agencies like a local business or the Art Institute of Chicago. These initiatives are plans for add-on school programs most of which do not affect the regular classroom teacher.

School personnel have tended to implement two sorts of initiatives that relate to the non-academic needs of students--discipline and attendance programs. At three schools, the staff has carried out discipline initiatives such as setting up an in-house suspension program or a time-out room for misbehaving students. At other schools they have implemented attendance initiatives that offer incentives to individuals or to entire classes for good attendance. Like the curricular add-ons, discipline and attendance programs are relatively easy to implement and monitor. Principals usually hire one or two additional staff members to supervise, teach, or counsel students, to organize incentives, and to handle paperwork. Gauging the implementation and the outcomes of these programs is also quite straightforward. When we asked about one school's attendance program, the principal quickly pointed out that attendance had risen two percent from the previous year!

The discipline and attendance programs illustrate a pattern of implementation typical of add-on initiatives. Their implementation usually depends on funding and new staff members, and they make relatively small demands on current school personnel. Some "other" initiatives, however, require a high level of commitment and energy; they follow the pattern of implementation typical of pedagogical initiatives. The critical element in the implementation of initiatives like parent and community involvement programs, staff mentoring programs, and one school's student-run advocacy office, is the considerable commitment of time and labor from at least some of the administration, staff, parents, and/or students. For instance, the effectiveness of parent involvement programs varies across the fourteen schools, and the implementation of a program in this area appears to depend entirely on both the dedication of the parents, and of the principal or some other staff member. It is important to recognize this distinction among the add-on initiatives.

Relationship between implementation patterns and types of SIP initiatives

	Pattern 1: Require significant commitment and time	Pattern 2: Require $ and new staff, but not widespread commitment
Initiatives likely to lead to instructional change	writing across curriculum team teaching whole language approach cooperative learning	none
Add-on programs	student conflict resolution some parent involvement	full-day kindergarten after-school tutoring pre-school programs computer labs attendance improvement

This examination of self-reported of implementation efforts has shown us that the initiatives that affect the regular classroom teacher, and so may lead to instructional changes, all require a commitment of time and effort to carry out (see table). Seven of the fourteen SIPs include initiatives for instructional changes, and staff at six of these schools report that they are making progress on implementing those initiatives. We have also learned that

school personnel can implement most add-on initiatives simply by using new funding and hiring new staff. A few add-ons, however, such as the student-run advocacy office for conflict resolution at one school and parent involvement programs at others, follow the more demanding pattern of implementation. The table illustrates this distinction among the add-on initiatives.

Conclusions about Implementing School Improvement Plan Initiatives

We have found two patterns of SIP implementation: 1) some initiatives require significant commitment of time and effort to be implemented successfully; and 2) other initiatives depend mostly on funding and new staff. Initiatives that require the participation of faculty, administrators, parents, and/or students take longer to implement and are constantly at risk from "non-believers" among the staff, from disillusionment, and from the possibility of ebbing commitment on the part of those already involved. Initiatives that basically require added funding and staffing tend to be implemented quickly and they are easily sustained by continued funding. Initiatives that more significantly affect the regular classroom teacher follow the first pattern of implementation, whereas most add-on programs adhere to the second. Because of the commitment required, however, add-on programs such as increasing parent and community involvement also tend to follow the first pattern.

We have also found that the SIP initiatives can be characterized as either programs primarily affecting the regular classroom teacher or add-on programs (those not directly affecting the classroom teacher). We uncovered this distinction by examining the differing patterns of implementation; a pedagogical, curricular, or organizational program that has an effect on the regular classroom teacher follows the lengthier pattern of implementation, whereas funding and more staff are generally sufficient to put most add-on programs into operation. The two sorts of initiatives are not, however, equivalent to the two patterns for implementing initiatives. Successful parent involvement programs, for example, generally take a long time and a great deal of effort to implement. Despite this, they are add-on initiatives because they are unlikely to directly affect teachers' activities and practices in the regular classroom.

One consistent overlap between the patterns of implementation and the types of initiatives does occur, however. The initiatives that directly affect regular classroom teachers always follow the lengthier and more demanding pattern of implementation. Programs designed to change teaching methods, the core curriculum, or the organizational design of the school do not fall into place with just funding and new staff. Each of these initiatives is, to some degree, a mini-plan that can bring about instructional changes when fully implemented. The implementation of an initiative to reduce class size can be more than an end in itself; it has the potential to affect the regular teacher's classroom practices. Similarly, a new literature-based language arts program can influence <u>how</u>, as well as <u>what</u>, the teacher teaches. To achieve their potential, these initiatives require staff development, teacher planning, and classroom fine-tuning. Our schools provide numerous examples, such as the stalled implementation of the Afro-centric curriculum in one elementary school, in

which the potential changes these initiatives promise have not yet been realized. Yet because of their potential to change instruction, the initiatives that most affect the regular classroom teachers cannot be implemented solely with funding and more staff.

Instructional changes in general are not easily implemented because of the time commitment required from teachers. The process of implementation from initiatives to actual changes in classrooms often takes more than a year. One principal noted that her faculty is now into its fourth year of working with the Erickson Institute to develop, carry out, and refine a whole language program. In fact, the SIP is a three-year plan, and some schools have approached change methodically over a two- to three-year period. A three-year schedule for implementation of an initiative provides sufficient time for teachers to meet and discuss student needs, plan for program changes, garner staff support, select and purchase materials and equipment, pilot the program if necessary, implement and adapt it to each classroom. Consequently, the implementation of initiatives that have an impact on instruction is on-going in our focus schools.

Not only does the process of bringing about instructional change take time, it also requires dedication and work. PPAC chairpersons note that a large percentage of teachers at a school--preferably all of them--must adopt a new philosophy or approach in order for it to translate into tangible changes at the classroom level. Research in the field tends to confirm this notion.[13] Committed teachers attend staff development programs and then alter their practices; most others do not. Short-term workshops are usually insufficient for the implementation of instructional changes. The focus school in this study undergoing the most significant instructional change has had staff development programs in science, reading, and writing. Teachers at this school concentrate on one content area each year for intensive staff development. Even though individual teachers may adjust their instructional practices without them, long term staff development programs seem to be essential for schoolwide instructional change.

One complication in assessing an SIP initiative's instructional impact lies with the great variety of professional educational experiences that are labelled "staff development." Many initiatives indicate that school personnel will receive some type of inservice or workshop, usually in conjunction with a new program. The depth, length, and effectiveness of such staff development varies widely, however. We see a wide range of professional education from short-term "workshops" to longer-term "staff development programs." One PPAC chairperson described the short-term workshops that teachers at her school attended this year:

> We've had two sessions. The first was a 30-minute session on the basal reading program. That was in September... we had two 90-minute workshops on the whole language program.

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[13] See Waxman (1985), "Research on School-based Improvement Programs: Its Implication for Curriculum Implementation," *Education, 105(3)*, 318-21.

In contrast, the majority of teachers at another school attended a staff development program conducted by the Illinois Writing Project for three hours every Wednesday afternoon for ten weeks. A ten-week staff development program for an initiative--whether pedagogical, curricular, or organizational--is much more likely to promote instructional change than two 90-minute workshops. The nature of an initiative's staff development component, then, can directly affect its instructional potential.

Not only are instructional changes more difficult to implement, they are also more difficult to monitor than most add-on programs. Our data about implementation consists of the perceptions of staff members. Additional information from classroom observations is needed to provide a more complete picture of the implementation status of a pedagogical initiative. Our current data indicate that instructional change is not occurring in most classrooms. Although this finding is preliminary, it is corroborated by *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*, in which the majority of elementary teachers said that their instructional practices had not changed as a result of school reform and will not change as a result of the SIP. Implementing a pedagogical, curricular, or organizational initiative so that it fulfills its instructional potential demands teachers' time and efforts. Changing instruction is difficult to do, difficult to monitor, and difficult to evaluate.

In contrast to instructional change initiatives, most add-on initiatives are relatively easy to implement and monitor. Add-on programs usually directly affect only a few teachers--just new staff hired specifically for the program. Efforts to gain widespread teacher support for implementation are generally unnecessary. Once the add-on program is funded, it is the responsibility of the principal (or of a designated person) to carry out administrative tasks necessary for implementation. Because it often has its own physical space, equipment, and/or staff, the add-on program is generally easier to monitor and evaluate than initiatives affecting classroom teachers. Implementation is complete when the program is in place and in operation.

Both add-on initiatives and the initiatives that affect classroom teachers may lead to school improvement in our focus schools. After the first year of SIP implementation, many add-on programs are in place. Fewer of the pedagogical, curricular, and organizational initiatives with the potential to bring about instructional changes have yet been fully implemented. Because changing teachers' practices is a complex task, it is not surprising that the implementation of such initiatives proceeds more slowly.

Discussion and Conclusions: What Contributes to Instructional Change?

As this analysis of reform initiatives and their implementation in fourteen schools shows, relatively few initiatives have yet prompted regular classroom teachers to change their teaching. In addition, the implementation of such initiatives is usually slower and more difficult than the implementation of add-on initiatives. Indeed, only half of the schools in our sample place any emphasis on instructional change in the first place, and it is central to the SIP in just four cases. Thus, the writing of a school improvement plan is no

guarantee that the practices of the classroom teacher will change. The responses elementary teachers throughout the city made to *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn* indicate that teachers recognize this as well:

> ...more than one-half of the teachers said that reform had not had an effect on their classroom practices. Further, fewer than one-half said that their instructional practices will change as a result of the School Improvement Plan. These results are interesting when compared with teachers' reports about improvements in their schools. Two-thirds of the teachers believe that the SIP will help to make their school better, yet only 45 percent see the SIP as changing their instructional practices. Apparently a substantial number of teachers expect improvement to occur externally rather than through a change in their own classroom practices. (page 11)

Instructional change is a possible, but relatively infrequent and hard-won, outcome of school improvement planning.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to conclude that SIPs make no contribution to improving instruction. They can act as a blueprint for directed change; they have certainly served that purpose in some of the focus schools. To write an SIP requires setting and prioritizing goals and specifying means for realizing them. SIPs detail which changes school personnel intend to make, and how they plan to make them--especially for pedagogical and curricular initiatives. SIP initiatives can promote greater instructional change when they call for staff development programs. Effective staff development not only introduces teachers to new instructional ideas, it also helps to extend the climate of expectation for change throughout the school and to strengthen the confidence of teachers as they undertake change. Therefore the effective implementation of the pedagogical, curricular, and organizational initiatives in an SIP encourages all the teachers at a school to improve their teaching and suggests how they should go about it. In addition, SIPs have provisions for monitoring the implementation of initiatives. By establishing staff responsibilities, timelines, and indicators of satisfactory implementation, SIPs can also set the pace of change and establish the measures of success. Clearly a school improvement plan can facilitate instructional changes when teachers at a school are open to change.

From our data we have identified four other factors that affect the instructional practices of the regular classroom teachers in some schools. First, one principal believes that the smaller size of her faculty fosters instructional change. Her staff numbers between twenty and thirty people, and they work together cohesively. At a larger school, she explained, "...it gets too difficult to manage. You don't have time to sit down and allow everybody to talk and really say what they want." Teachers at this school share instructional ideas and create a supportive environment for trying them out. The smaller school size encourages collegiality and innovation with classroom practices.

Second, principals who take responsibility for instructional leadership can persuade teachers to experiment with new approaches to teaching and provide support when they do. Principals address this issue individually through teacher evaluation and supervision. Perhaps more importantly, however, they are able to help direct schoolwide instructional

reform by taking the lead on staff development programs. One principal discusses her efforts to promote professional development at her school:

> We're proud of people who achieve here and you (the teachers at this school) are going to achieve, too....At 2:30, you are finished and at 3:00, you go into staff development. And, people are signing up for it! Twenty people took the writing (staff development program), and I got twelve people to take mathematics, and hopefully I'm going to get my whole staff (to take the mathematics program). I was gentle at first, but I'm going to be stronger now!

Principals like this one can act as a catalyst for instructional change in their schools.

Funding is the third factor we have identified as facilitating the implementation of instructional change. Although our analysis has borne out that instructional change requires much more than just resources, it usually requires resources as well. Funding is needed to provide staff development programs, compensate teachers for the time they spend on instructional improvement, and purchase classroom materials and equipment appropriate to the new teaching methods. In these ways, funding serves as an element in improving instructional practices.

Finally, we find that a certain philosophy or "ethos" where teachers and students share responsibility for student learning pervades the schools where teachers are making schoolwide instructional changes. We define this ethos as having two component beliefs: 1) that teachers have primary responsibility for academic learning--an attitude whereby teachers believe that their own instructional practices are critical; and 2) that students must also be actively involved in their own learning. The following excerpts from the SIP and a grant application of one of our focus schools exemplify its statement of this philosophy:

> "...we need teachers who must have the vision and guts to buck the system and become actively engaged in the education of their children. Educators are the child's second most influential teachers. The responsibility for the academic training belongs primarily to the educators." (SIP)

> "In our plan for student development we have concentrated on...our students' involvement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum....We are counting on our students to assume responsibility along with ownership of and involvement in the instruction program." (Grant application)

We do not know whether this philosophy actually precipitates instructional changes or results from them. We suspect that both may be true--that this ethos interacts with a faculty's willingness to improve teaching. The SIPs and the interviews with school personnel suggest that these beliefs have some bearing on schoolwide commitments to instructional innovation.

Four of the schools in our sample articulated this ethos in their school improvement plans, but just three have been successfully implementing schoolwide instructional changes. Only a relatively small group of teachers at the fourth school attend instructional staff development. The staff interviewed at the three schools undergoing the more extensive changes commented on the schoolwide beliefs about student learning. At the fourth school,

though, the principal distinguished those teachers who are "religious" about their responsibility for improving student learning from the rest of the staff. Although only further study will uncover the precise nature of the relationship, we believe that an acceptance of the joint teacher-student responsibility for students' learning plays an important part in the schoolwide implementation of change in teachers' practices.

One of the schools that is making extensive instructional changes--many of which are schoolwide--exemplifies almost all of these factors. It is not a small school, but it does have: 1) a clear and innovative SIP dedicated to improving the classroom practices of all the teachers at the school; 2) a principal who provides the school with strong instructional leadership; 3) resources earmarked for staff development programs and for classroom materials and equipment for the new programs; and 4) a pervasive ethos that teachers and students share the responsibility for student learning. Examples of the instructional changes this school is implementing include Socratic seminars, a literature-based reading program, extensive use of hands-on learning in mathematics, an experimental approach to science, and an innovative writing program. All of these instructional changes were preceded by extensive staff development programs that the majority of the teachers attended. Teachers in the writing program, for example, have completed a thirty hour staff development program and are now using a variety of techniques to stimulate more student writing. One innovative writing activity involves composing and revising a group story by students and their teacher. The students offer their ideas about the story as the teacher writes and edits it on the computer. Other activities, such as report writing for social studies and journal writing, are more individually based. In addition to their classroom writing, all students and their classroom teacher attend a writing lab twice a week. The school also invited parents to attend the staff development program for this schoolwide writing initiative. A school committee wrote a grant to compensate twenty-five parents for their "classes" in the computer lab to learn keyboard skills and how to use the reading software. The parents, teachers, and principal at this school work together to further student learning and, in particular, the teachers have made a commitment to many instructional changes.

We have not included staff development in this final discussion; rather we have examined those school attributes that drive the planning of, attendance at, and acceptance of staff development programs. Here, however, we wish to underscore explicitly the importance of staff development to changing teachers' instructional practices. As one SIP states, "Staff development is the key to the improvement of the instructional program."

This paper has dealt with the implementation of the SIP initiatives in 14 focus schools. We found that many initiatives are being implemented and adapted to improve student learning. The implementation of some initiatives is a process requiring a commitment of time and effort from the school staff, parents, and students. Administrators readily implement other initiatives by securing funding for them and hiring new staff. The implementation of initiatives that affect the regular classroom teachers follow the incremental and developmental pattern; they require teachers to plan and attend staff development, modify their lessons, try out new methods, and then adjust their pedagogical

and curricular innovations to meet their students' needs. These are the steps in carrying out instructional changes.

We have identified several factors that are facilitating the implementation of instructional changes in some of the focus schools. Smaller school size, principals who take on the role of strong instructional leaders, funding for staff development, and an ethos of shared teacher-student responsibility for student learning are associated with the degree to which schools are committed to carrying out initiatives that affect teaching practices. We expect these instructional innovations in the regular classroom will play a pivotal role in the achievement of the goals of Chicago school reform.